

Crisis Handbook

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Introduction

In moments of Crisis, whether faced by a loved one, a friend, or ourselves, it can feel like navigating through a labyrinth with no clear path forward. These are the times when our support, understanding, and actions matter most.

At Hope Therapy & Counselling Services, we understand the profound impact that crises can have on individuals and those who care about them. We recognise the importance of knowing how to respond with empathy, respect, and constructive support.

What help can I get in a crisis?

In the United Kingdom, numerous resources and services are available to support individuals facing mental health crises.

If you don't feel you can keep yourself safe now:

- **Emergency Services:** In life-threatening situations or if someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department. Emergency services will provide prompt medical assistance and ensure safety.
- **Ask someone else to call 999** or ask them to take you straight to A&E.

If you need urgent support but don't want to, or can't, call 999 or go to A&E, you could try the following options:

- **Samaritans:** The Samaritans offer a confidential listening service for individuals in distress or experiencing suicidal thoughts. You can reach them anytime by calling 116 123, emailing jo@samaritans.org, or visiting their website to chat online.
- **NHS 111:** you require urgent medical help or advice but it's not a lifethreatening situation, you can call NHS 111. This service is available 24/7 and can provide guidance on accessing appropriate mental health support in your area.
- **NHS Mental Health Services:** The NHS provides various mental health services, including crisis support teams and community mental health teams. You can contact your local NHS mental health trust or consult your GP for referrals and guidance on accessing these services.
- **Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment (CRHT):** CRHT teams offer intensive support to individuals experiencing mental health crises in their homes or communities. They provide assessment, short-term intervention, and further care coordination as needed. Contact your local NHS mental health trust or NHS 111 for CRHT services in your area.

- **Local Mental Health Charities:** Many mental health charities in the UK offer crisis support services, helplines, and online resources. Organisations such as Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, and Mental Health Foundation provide information, advice, and peer support to individuals in Crisis.
- **Local Crisis Cafes and Safe Spaces:** Some areas have crisis cafes or safe spaces where individuals experiencing mental health crises can access support in a non-clinical setting. These venues offer a safe environment to talk to trained staff, access resources, and receive emotional support.
- **Text and Online Support Services:** Text and online support services are available for individuals who prefer non-verbal communication or are unable to make phone calls. Services such as Shout, Crisis Text Line, and Samaritans offer confidential support via text messaging or online chat.
- **GP Services:** Your GP (general practitioner) can provide initial assessment and referrals to mental health services if you're experiencing a crisis. Contact your GP practice to schedule an appointment or request urgent assistance if necessary.
- **Community Support Groups:** Local community organisations, peer support groups, and faith-based communities may offer additional support to individuals experiencing mental health crises. These groups can provide a sense of belonging, understanding, and practical assistance.

Remember, you're not alone, and help is available. Don't hesitate to reach out for support if you're struggling. Whether you need immediate intervention or ongoing care, there are services and people ready to assist you on your journey to recovery and wellbeing.

What constitutes a mental health crisis?

A mental health crisis refers to a period of intense emotional or psychological distress that significantly impacts an individual's ability to cope with daily life. It can manifest in various forms and may involve feelings of overwhelming despair, panic, hopelessness, or loss of control.

Recognising the signs of a mental health crisis is essential for seeking appropriate support and intervention. Here are some indicators that someone may be experiencing a mental health crisis:

- **Intense Emotional Distress:** Persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger, or irritability that interfere with normal functioning.
- **Suicidal Thoughts or Behaviours:** Expressing thoughts of self-harm or suicide, making suicide attempts, or engaging in risky behaviours that indicate a desire to end one's life.

- **Psychotic Symptoms:** Experiencing hallucinations, delusions, or severe disorientation that disrupts reality and impairs judgment (including hearing voices).
- **Severe Mood Swings:** Rapid shifts in mood from extreme highs (mania or hypomania) to extreme lows (depression), accompanied by impulsive or reckless behaviour.
- **Inability to Cope:** Difficulty managing daily tasks, responsibilities, or relationships due to overwhelming emotional distress or mental health symptoms.
- **Withdrawal or Isolation:** Increased reliance on alcohol, drugs, or other substances as a means of coping with emotional pain or distress.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Experiencing physical symptoms such as insomnia, changes in appetite, unexplained aches or pains, or deterioration in physical health due to mental health issues.
- **Panic Attacks:** Experiences of extreme panic.
- **Paranoia:** Persistent feeling that people are 'out to get you' or that you are the subject of persistent, intrusive attention by others.

You might also have other experiences not mentioned in the above list.

It's important to note that a mental health crisis can occur for various reasons, including underlying mental health conditions, traumatic experiences, life transitions, or significant stressors. Additionally, individuals may experience crises differently based on their unique circumstances and vulnerabilities.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, it's crucial to seek help promptly.

However you experience a mental health crisis, it is always ok to reach out for support.

Additional Resources & Support

You may want extra support outside of the therapy room. Here is a list of some providers, both national and local.

Alcoholics Anonymous: AA helps those with an alcohol addiction through support and meetings.

Beaumont Society: Transgender support group

Childline: A free helpline for children and young people in the UK, call 0800 1111 to talk about any problem.

Cruse Bereavement Care: Help and support for those who have suffered a loss.

Home-Start: UK's family support charity.

Employee Therapy Solutions: Work-Based Mental Health & Wellbeing Support.

Mind: Mental health charity with local branches

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: Freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Oxford Nightline: a listening, support and information service run for and by students of Oxford and Oxford Brookes universities

Survivor Space Oxfordshire: Supporting women who have experienced rape and sexual abuse

Oxford Safe Haven: An out-of-hours, non-clinical space offering crisis support, signposting, listening support.

Samaritans: A charity available 24 hours a day offering a confidential listening service to anyone in distress.

Switchboard: LGBT+ Helpline

Victim Support: A national charity that helps anyone who has been affected by crime.

Therapy Professional Bodies

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP): The BABCP is a multi-disciplinary interest group for people involved in the practice and theory of behavioural and cognitive psychotherapy.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP): The BACP is the leading accrediting body for UK counsellors and psychotherapists.

British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC): The BPC is an association of institutions made up of psychoanalysts, analytical psychologists, psychoanalytic psychotherapists and child psychotherapists.

The National Counselling Society (NCS): This Not For Profit association of counsellors and psychotherapists aim to support the counselling profession, members and training organisations.

United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP): The UKCP is a comprehensive register of UK Psychotherapists. United Kingdom Association for Humanistic Psychology Practitioners

UKAHPP: The UKAHPP is a national accrediting organisation for all those who apply the theories of Humanistic Psychology in their work.